

Role of Various Organisations in the Development of Women Entrepreneurship in India

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship plays an important role in the growth of any society. India is a vast country with an estimated population of more than 1.25 billion of which nearly half are women. Entrepreneurship amongst women in India is relatively a recent phenomenon. Since 1975 the international year of women, various programmes are being conducted in order to improve the status of women. A multitude of institutions have been set up in the private as well as in public sector for the development of women. A number of departments of Central and state Governments in our country have also rendering commendable services for promotion of entrepreneurship among women. India has highlighted the need for entrepreneurship programmes for women to enable them to start small scale enterprises. It is in this context the present paper focuses on the role of various organisations in the development of women entrepreneurship in India.

Key Words: Development, Government Organisation, Entrepreneurship

1. Introduction:

Entrepreneurship plays an important role in the growth of any society. A country's economic progress is found to be positively correlated with the rise in number and quality of its entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship emerges from an individual's creative spirit. Entrepreneurial skills are essential for industrialisation and for alleviation of mass unemployment and poverty. The world's modern democratic economy depends on the participation of the both sexes (Vasantha Gopal & Santha:2008).

"Women's economic contributions are grossly undervalued or not valued at all. In no society do women enjoy the same opportunities as men do. Women and men still continue to live in an unequal world". This is the message of the Human Development Report 1995 published by the UNDP. This is true in every part of the world where women are not treated on par with men in many aspects. Women also have to shoulder the additional responsibility of child bearing and rearing. This consumes much of their productive time and effort. In the sphere of entrepreneurial development, women are constrained by a variety of socio-economic factors (Borkakoti & Barua 1998)".

The nineteenth century can be said to be a significant milestone in the women's history. There were both socio-cultural and political movements which brought about the tremendous change in the status of women (Seth 2000). During the post-independence period, 1975 came to be declared as the international year for women. A number of programmes have been launched in order to enhance the status of women (Chandra & Kajipet 1998). At the same time United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) declared 1975-85 as the decade of the women. United Nations organised international conference on the theme of the "Decade for Women" at Copenhagen in Denmark on 30th of June, 1980. The most important outcome of this global conference was the passing of a resolution aimed at promoting equal opportunities and equal treatment for women in the sphere of employment and equal opportunity for them in the field of non-traditional skills. In order to fulfill these goals, India organised its first ever National Conference for Women Entrepreneurs at New Delhi in November, 1981 (Badi & Badi 2005).

Women population constitutes almost half of the total population (48.3 percent) of India that was 495.74 million, as per 2001 Census (Government of India 2002-2007). As it is considerably large section of human resources of the country, which must be utilised in the field of economy in the most productive way. (Das 1998).

2. Bringing Women Into The Mainstream of National Development :

Development of Indian women has been receiving attention of the Government right from the very first plan period (1951-56). Social welfare approach was adopted to empower the women from the first plan to the fifth plan period (1956-79). The Third and the Fourth Five-Year Plans had supported female education as a major welfare measure.

A major shift in the approach from 'Welfare' to 'Development' of women could take place only during the Sixth Plan Period (1980-85). Accordingly the Sixth Plan document adopted a multi-disciplinary approach with a special thrust on the three core sectors of health, education and employment. In the Seventh Plan (1985-90), the developmental programmes continued with the major objective of raising their economic and social status and bringing them into the mainstream of national development (Government of India 2002-2007).

The Seventh Five -Year Plan, operated in keeping with the spirit of the decade which aimed at integrating women into the mainstream of national development, emphasised the need to open up new avenues of work for women and perceive them as a crucial resource for the development of the country (Rani 1996). This plan emphasised the need for gender equality and empowerment. For the first time, emphasis was placed upon qualitative aspects such as inculcation of confidence, generation of awareness with regards to rights and training in skills for better employment. The Eighth Five-Year Plan focused on empowering women, especially at the Grass Roots Level, through Panchayati Raj Institutions. The Tenth Five-Year Plan aims at empowering women through translating the recently adopted National Policy for Empowerment of Women into action and ensuring Survival, Protection and Development of Women and Children through rights based approach (Goyal&Parkash 2011).

An integrated scheme for women's empowerment through Self Help Groups (SHGs) was the major scheme which was implemented by the Ministry of WCD in the Eleventh Plan. The vision of the Eleventh five year plan was to end multifaceted exclusions and discriminations faced by women and children; to ensure that every woman and child in the country is able to develop his/her full potential and share the benefits of economic growth and prosperity. Swayamsidha Phase-II was launched as a countrywide programme with larger coverage in states lagging behind in women development indices (Lavanya 2010).

3. Women Entrepreneurship In India:

Under the Seventh Five-Year Plan, a special chapter was focused on integration of women in development. In this regard the plan suggested, (a) to treat women as a specific target group in all development programmes, (b) to properly diversify vocational training facilities for women to suit their varied needs and skills, (c) to encourage appropriate technology, equipment and practice for reducing economic disparities, d) to provide marketing assistance at the state level and e) to increase women's participation in the Government of India. The policy further adds that the objective of such courses should be to give representation to women in the field of small scale industrial development with a view to uplift their status in the economic and social fields (Prasad 1998).

In 1978, the State Bank of India began undertaking Entrepreneurship Development Programmes (EDPs). In 1979, entrepreneurship training programmes for self-employment were arranged for the women beneficiaries of the government's TRYSEM programme (Lavanya 2010). The First National Conference of Women Entrepreneurs held at New Delhi in November 1981 called for priority to women in the allotment of land, sheds, sanction of power, industrial licensing etc. It also recommended the simplification of loan procedures, counselling services, Centralised marketing agency and special training programmes for women entrepreneurs. The second International Conference of Women Entrepreneurs organised by the National Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs (NAYE) was held at New Delhi in 1989, under the Aegis of the World Assembly of Small and Medium Enterprises (WASME).

In India, ladies wing of the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, National Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs (NAYE) and all the other voluntary agencies assist women entrepreneurs. The nationalised banks and state financial corporations advance loans to women entrepreneurs on the preferential basis. State Industrial Development Corporations and District Industries Centres provide loans, subsidies and grants to women entrepreneurs. State level agencies assist women entrepreneurs in preparing project reports, buying machinery and building, training and hiring staff (Prasad 1998).

4. Role of Government and Semi-Government Organisations to the Development of Women Entrepreneurs.

Various Government and semi-government agencies are providing assistance to women entrepreneurs for the development of women entrepreneurship. The major agencies and their areas of assistance are listed below:

4.1 National Level Organisations:

The following national level organisations contribute to the development of women Entrepreneurship.

4.2 National Standing Committee on Women Entrepreneurs:

A National Standing Committee on Women Entrepreneurs was constituted under the chairpersonship of Smt. Margaret Alva, the then Minister of State for Sports, Youth Affairs, Women and Child Welfare, to look into the problems of women entrepreneurs and evolve policies for the promotion of entrepreneurs and evolve common policies for the promotion of entrepreneurship among the women in the country. The committee is represented by all the agencies connected with the entrepreneurship development (FICCI, FASSI, NAYE, Women Entrepreneurs and officials). The committee held its first ever meeting on the 6th October, 1986 at New Delhi and reviewed the general position of entrepreneurship development among the women. As a first step in this direction, it was proposed to consolidate the information on women entrepreneurs, the various types of assistance provided by the States and Union Territories so as to evolve a common pattern of assistance needed for the development of entrepreneurship among women on a more firm footing in the country (Government of India 1986-87).

4.3 Small Industries Development Organisation (SIDO):

SIDO provides comprehensive range of consultancy services and technical, managerial, economic, statistical and marketing assistance to small scale units through its network of 26 Small Industries Service Institutes (SISI) and three Process-cum Product Development Centres (India 1986: 465). SIDO is an apex body and the nodal agency for formulating, coordinating and monitoring the policies and programmes for the promotion and development of small scale industries in the country. It maintains close relations with Central Ministries, Planning Commission, State Governments, Financial Institutions, Voluntary Organisations and other agencies concerned with the development of small scale industries. In addition, there are also specialised institutions like Central Institute of Tool Design, Hyderabad, Central Tool Room and Training Centre at Ludhiana and Calcutta, Central Institute of Hand Tools, Jalandhar, Institute for Design of Electrical Measuring Instruments (IDEMI), Bombay, Integrated Training Centre, Nilokheri, National Institute of Small Industry Extension Training (NISIET) Hyderabad, National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD), New Delhi, Process -cum -Product Development Centres (Foundry and Forging at Agra and Sports Goods and Leisure Time Equipment at Meerut) and Electronic Service and Training Centre, Ramnagar, which provide training and technical services in the specialised fields. SIDO is thus an apex body organising the implementation of Governmental Policies regarding small enterprises and also the policies regarding development of women entrepreneurs (Rani 1996).

4.4 National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development [NIESBUD]:

A National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development was established in 1983 for laying down policies, reviewing the programmes of various agencies in the field of entrepreneurship development of different target groups and institute has been organising and conducting programmes for motivators, trainers and entrepreneurs. The institute has been serving as a forum for interaction and exchange of views on EDPs (Government of India 1986). The NIESBUD has a special cell to meet the requirements of women entrepreneurs.

4.5 Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI):

Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) was established in April 1990 by an Act of Parliament, as an apex institution for promotion, finance and development of small scale industries and for co-ordinating the functions of other institutions engaged in similar activities. It provides direct and indirect assistance to small scale sector. Its direct assistance schemes are Project Finance Scheme, Equipment Finance Scheme, Marketing

scheme, Vendor Development Scheme, Infrastructural Development Scheme, ISO Certification, Venture Capital Scheme and Resource Support to Institutions involved in the development and financing of small scale sector.

The SIDBI has launched two schemes for women entrepreneurs, viz, 1) Mahila Udyam Nidhi Scheme (MUN): This scheme is offered to women entrepreneurs for setting up new projects in tiny/ small scale sector and rehabilitation of viable sick SSI units. Existing tiny and small scale industrial units and service enterprises undertaking expansion, modernisation, technology upgradation and diversification are also eligible.

2) Mahila Vikas Nidhi Scheme: SIDBI operationalises this programme by assisting accredited NGOs (NGOs that have been in existence for at least five years, registered with properly constituted laws, memorandum and articles of association, properly maintained accounts and having good track record) to create training and marketing infrastructure especially for rural women (Vasanthagopal & Santha 2010).

4.6 District Industries Centre (DIC):

The District Industries Centre's programme was started on 1st May, 1978 as a centrally sponsored scheme to assist small, tiny village and cottage industries widely spread in rural and semi-urban areas (Rani 1996).

The District Industries Centres (DICs) functioning as a nodal agency for providing requisite support services to village and small entrepreneurs under a single roof. The DIC undertakes economic investigation of the potential for development of district covering all aspects like availability of resources, supply of machinery and equipment and raw materials, effective arrangement of credit facilities, marketing assistance and quality control, research and training. The DICs are also operational machines for according sanction and other facilities for setting up industries in the rural areas and ensuring their continued viable operation by developing close linkages with the rural development institutions on the one hand and with the specialised and developmental institutions on the other. Assistance to women entrepreneurs given under the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), Self-Employment for Educated Unemployed Youth (SEEUY) and Mahila Grammodityog Schemes, are monitored by DIC (ibid 1996).

4.7 National Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs (NAYE):

NAYE is a national organisation of young entrepreneurs of the country. Apart from looking into the interests of young entrepreneurs, the organisation takes special care of the interests of women entrepreneurs. It seeks to create unity among female entrepreneurs and encourage them to participate actively in the country's industrialisation. Major achievements of NAYE are as follows:

- 1) Establishing its credibility in both Governmental and Non- Governmental circles as highly professional, competent, effective and efficient Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) representing small and medium enterprises.
- 2) Establishing its effective presence in the area of international co-operation in small and medium enterprise sector.
- 3) Creating a profound impact of various strategies, policies and procedures put on the anvil by the Central and State Governments for performing small and medium enterprises and
- 4) Creating and nurturing a new class of women entrepreneurs and enabling them to acquire their rightful place in the Indian Economy (Rani 1996).

4.8 National Institute of Small Industries Extension Training, Hyderabad (NISIET):

The Government of India has established its institute known as the Small Industry Extension Training Institute (SIET) in 1960 under the Ministry of Industry for promotion and development of small industries. The institute

has been raised to the level of National Institute and renamed as National Institute of Small Industry Extension Training (NISIET) From September, 1984.

The institute is doing some studies on women entrepreneurs based on the EDP for them. The NISIET is at present engaged in training the personnel of the Central and State Governments, nationalised and other commercial banks, financial corporations, and associations of small industries, large industries, small industrialists and industrial consultants. Besides training, the NISIET conducts research for the small industry development in all its ramifications, adoption of modern management techniques to small industry, marketing development of backward areas, training methods, communication, etc. (Shinde 2002).

4.9 Women Enterprise Development Scheme (WEDS) of North Eastern Financial Institution:

NEFI, as a financial institution has been working for the economic upliftment of the women in the north-eastern region by providing them training and financial assistance under Micro Finance Scheme, North East Equity Fund Scheme, Scheme for North East Handloom and Handicrafts, Jute Enterprises Development Scheme etc. NEFI offers a special scheme exclusively for women entrepreneurs at liberal terms and conditions wherein financial assistance would be provided for any viable income generating activity to help the women for taking up business ventures. Existing business ventures will also be eligible under the scheme for expansion, modernisation and diversification. (Vasanthagopal & Santha 2010)

5. Concluding Remarks:

Government of India has realised that economic development is not possible without active participation of women. Government of India has been trying for the development of women right from the first plan period. Various policies, programmes have been undertaken to foster women entrepreneurship in India. Entrepreneurship Development of India, Ahmadabad, National Institute of Entrepreneurship and small Business Development, New Delhi, Indian Council of Women Entrepreneurs, New Delhi, National Science and Technology Entrepreneurship Development Board, New Delhi, National Standing Committee on Women Entrepreneurs etc. are some of the leading organisations set up for the development of entrepreneurship in general and women entrepreneurship in particular. As we know that, women have to play a dual role, as a house wife and as a income earner. Although, educational, social and cultural changes occurred in a society, women have to perform dual role as a housewives or as bread winners. A large number of women have emerged as entrepreneurs in many areas such as engineering, electronics in metropolitan cities of the country. However the situation is much more different in the regional cities. Still the area of women entrepreneurship is confined largely to a particular class, community and culture. In spite of efforts taken by various organisations Indian women still have been fighting to succeed in many specialised areas of business/profession.

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